

Watervliet Arsenal
Barracks
(Building 24, Operations Directorate Office)
Arnold Lane south of Westervelt Avenue
Watervliet
Albany County
New York

HABS No. NY-5521G

HABS
NY,
1-WAVL,
1/24 -

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HAB
NY
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1/24-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WATERVLIET ARSENAL
BARRACKS

HABS No. NY-5521G

(Building 24, Operations Directorate Office)

Location:

Arnold Lane south of Westervelt Avenue,
Watervliet Arsenal,
Watervliet,
Albany County, New York.

USGS Troy South Quadrangle, Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 18.605860.4730145

Present Owner and Occupant: U.S. Army

Present Use: Operations Directorate Office

Significance: The building is an excellent and largely intact example of early permanent construction at the arsenal. As the only example of enlisted troop housing surviving on its original site, the building also contributes to an understanding of the arsenal's overall history.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: In 1843 \$8,000 was appropriated for erection of a barracks at the arsenal. Construction was underway by August when the arsenal's commanding officer notified the Ordnance Department that "The walls of the Barracks will undoubtedly be finished by the end of September..." (Kyle, p. 111). The date 1843 is also carved into the foundation on the southeast corner of the building.
2. Architect: Not known. The building was probably designed by Ordnance Department personnel.
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Army
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Not known.
5. Original plans and construction: No original drawings or plans were located. The 1845 map (HAER Photo No. NY-1A-79) illustrates the barracks as a rectangular, gable-roofed structure. An 1875 photograph of the building shows porches on the east and west elevations and dormers, all of which have been removed.
6. Alterations and additions: The building appears to have remained unaltered until 1940-41, when the porches on the east and west elevations were removed. The porches still appear on a

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photograph of the building taken on May 16, 1940 but are not shown on drawings done later in the year. The photograph is in the collection of the Watervliet Arsenal Museum. The drawings are in the arsenal's Engineering Division. The current cast-bronze stairway and door guards on the east elevation were added at that time.

The building was further altered in the 1940s. The elevated and ground level wood frame passageways to Building 35 on the west elevation were added. A basement window opening in the northern bay of the east elevation was also enlarged to incorporate a door. In late 1949 all six dormers were removed and the slate roofing was replaced with asphalt shingles.

Since the building was converted to office use in the early 1940s, partition walls have been added dividing interior spaces. Wall and ceiling finishes have also been changed in most of the rooms on the first floor, and fireplaces have been covered.

B. Historical Context:

During the nineteenth century, the building housed not only unmarried soldiers but also enlisted men and their families (Kyle, p. 241). It served as the arsenal's barracks until 1930, when the installation's Ordnance Company was transferred to Aberdeen Proving Ground and remained vacant until 1941 at which time it was converted to offices for the Works Manager (A History of Watervliet Arsenal, p. 116). The building is currently the Operations Directorate Office.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Although altered by the removal of the porches and dormers on the east and west elevations, the building retains its original two-story height, rectangular shape, and massive stone walls with classical detailing.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is in good condition and is well maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The rectangular two-and-one-half story building with full basement measures 90' 7" (seven bay front) x 42'.

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2. Foundations: Foundations are random coursed ashlar limestone above grade on the east side and below grade on the west. The water table is dressed limestone.
3. Walls: Walls are coursed ashlar limestone with a limestone belt course at the second floor window sill level. Dressed limestone pilasters rising from the water table to the cornice accent the corners of the building.
4. Structural system, framing: Walls are load bearing, approximately 2' 9" thick in the basement and 2' 2" thick on the first and second floors. The roof is supported by heavy timber trusses (HAER Photo No. NY-1G-5).
5. Porches: A pair of cast-iron and brass straight-run stairs with thin newel post and balusters lead to a platform at the main entrance at the center of the east side.
6. Chimneys: Two massive stone chimneys with corbelled stone caps straddle the ridge at the north and south ends of the building.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance at the center of the east elevation is a transomed, six vertical panel, wood personnel door flanked by paneled pilasters and four-light sides. Doors in the second and sixth bays are French doors with outer screen doors and metal door guards. On the east elevation at the basement level, are double-leaf, glazed metal personnel doors in the center and a three horizontal panel, four-light, wood personnel door at the north end. A wood personnel door leads to the basement level on the south side. On the west elevation, there are glazed wood personnel doors in the second and sixth bays of the first floor.
 - b. Windows: Basement windows are either eight-over-eight-light, double-hung wood sash with flat stone lintels and stone lug sills. First and second story windows are twelve-over-twelve-light, double-hung wood sash with flat stone lintels. Second story sills on the east and west elevations are formed by the belt course. The belt course is cut away below the second story windows on the north and south. Second story windows at the center of the east and west elevations are twelve-over-twelve-light, double-hung

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wood sash flanked by narrow three-over-three-light, double-hung wood sash. Gable end windows are eight-over-eight-light, double-hung wood sash with flat stone lintels and stone lug sills.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: A stone course encircles the building below molded boxed metal eaves which form capitals for the pilasters at the corners of the building.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: The basement door at the center of the building opens onto a central hall containing the stairs. Access to the women's locker room and restroom south of the hall and the five rooms north of the hall is through a narrow hall running the width of the building along the east wall. The men's restroom and storage room south of the central hall open off a third hall on the west wall. A long room 8' 6" wide extending the full length of the building on the west is entered only from the exterior. (See supplemental material, floor plans)
- b. First floor: The first floor entrance opens onto a central hall containing the stairs. Hallways along the east and west walls provide access to the four major rooms (two on either side of the central hall). The two major rooms at the south end of the building have been divided by partition walls to form smaller office spaces. The west door opens to a covered passage leading to Building 35. (See supplemental material, floor plans)
- c. Second floor: The central hall is divided into two sections containing the stairs from the first floor and those to the attic. A second hallway along the west wall provides access to the four rooms (two on each side of the central hall). The west hall is terminated on the north by four steps leading to the bridge passage to Building 35. (See supplemental material, floor plans)
- d. Attic: The attic is divided by a partition wall south of the stairs.

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2. Stairways: The open straight-run stair along the north wall of the central hall has square newel posts and a plain wood balustrade.
3. Flooring: Basement floors are concrete or concrete covered with linoleum. Flooring on the first floor is linoleum. Floors on the second floor are narrow-width boards. Attic floors are random-width boards.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Basement walls and ceilings are either plaster or drywall. Walls on the first floor are plaster or wood paneling. Ceilings are accoustical tile. Second floor walls and ceilings are plaster. Exterior attic walls are stone, and the partition wall dividing the attic is vertical tongue and groove boards. The ceiling is formed by the wood roof deck.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Doors are glazed wood or flush personnel set in plain wood frames. Surrounds for most doors on the second floor are architrave trim with corner blocks.
 - b. Windows: Window trim is similar to door trim.
6. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating, air conditioning: The building is heated by steam. Fireplaces have been covered. Chimneys are connected to the fireplaces by a pair of sloped brick flues leading from the base of the chimney to the fireplaces. Arched openings are cut in the center of each flue structure (HABS Photo No. NY-5521G-5). The building is cooled by window air conditioners.
 - b. Lighting: Lighting is provided by fluorescent or incandescent fixtures.
 - c. Plumbing: Plumbing fixtures are modern.

D. Site:

The building faces east onto Arnold Lane south of Westervelt Avenue. Its original isolated position near the south end of the arsenal has been obscured by wartime industrial construction.

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PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings:

Main Entrance Stairs. 1940. Watervliet Arsenal Engineering Division.

Door Guards and Roof Drains. 1941. Watervliet Arsenal Engineering Division.

Elevations, Section, and Plans. 1949. 8 sheets. Watervliet Arsenal Engineering Division.

B. Early Views:

East elevation in May 1875. Cottage for enlisted mens' family shown at right. Watervliet Arsenal Museum. (HABS Photo No. NY-5521G-6)

South and east elevations before removal of porches and dormers. Taken between about 1918 and 1940. Watervliet Arsenal Museum. (HABS Photo No. NY-5521G-7)

Barracks, looking northwest. Dated May 16, 1940. Watervliet Arsenal Museum. Shows porch and dormers on the east elevation.

C. Bibliography:

Secondary and published sources:

Building Technology, Inc. Historic Properties Report Watervliet Arsenal, Watervliet, New York and Rotterdam Family Housing Area, Rotterdam, New York. January 1985. The report and inventory cards for the arsenal are filed as field records in the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress under HAER No. NY-1A.

A History of Watervliet Arsenal, 1813 to Modernization 1982.
Watervliet New York: U.S. Army, Watervliet Arsenal, n.d. Discusses building's use in the 1930s and 1940s.

Kyle, Francis K. A History of Watervliet Arsenal. Watervliet, New York: Watervliet Arsenal, 1920. Quotes contemporary correspondence concerning construction and occupants of the building. Copy available in the Watervliet Arsenal Museum.

D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

Records of the Office of the Chief of Ordnance, Record Group 156, and Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, Record Group 77,

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Navy and Old Army Branch, National Archives, Washington, D.C. should be further investigated.

E. Supplemental Material:

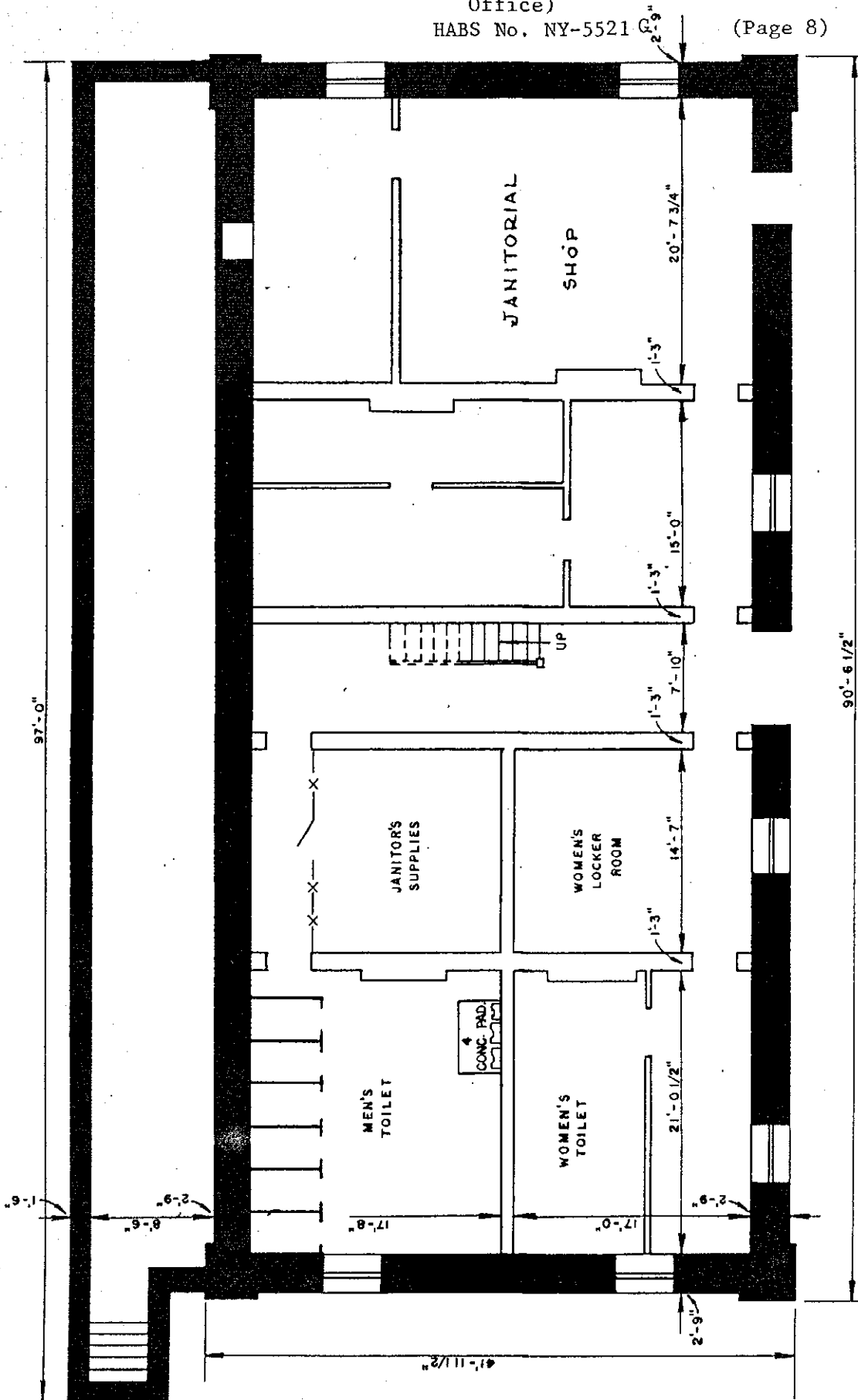
Basement, First, and Second Floor Plans, Building No. 24. No date. 3 sheets. Watervliet Arsenal Engineering Division. Current floor plans of building.

Prepared by: Barbara E. Hightower
Historian
MacDonald and Mack Partnership
February 1985

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was part of a program initiated through a memorandum of agreement between the National Park Service and the U.S. Department of the Army. Stanley H. Fried, Chief, Real Estate Branch of Headquarters DARCOM, and Dr. Robert J. Kapsch, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, were program directors. Sally Kress Tompkins of HABS/HAER was program manager, and Robie S. Lange of HABS/HAER was project manager. Under the direction of William A. Brenner, Building Technology Incorporated, Silver Spring, Maryland, acted as primary contractor, and MacDonald and Mack Partnership, Minneapolis, was a major subcontractor. The project included a survey of historic properties at Watervliet Arsenal, as well as preparation of an historic properties report and HABS/HAER documentation for 17 buildings. The survey, report, and documentation were completed by Barbara E. Hightower, historian, Minneapolis. The photographs were taken by Robert A. Ryan and J Ceronie of Dennett, Muessig, Ryan, and Associates, Ltd., Iowa City, Iowa. Drawings were produced by Gary M. Louris, Minneapolis.

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WATERVLIET ARSENAL

WATERVILLE, N.Y.

Drawn by: J.R.GANGEMI, A.E. App'd by:

UNIT OF: **DR. V. VANDANA, I.C. APPD.**
BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN
METHODS & QUALITY
CONTROL BUILDING
BUILDING NO. 24

ASSESSMENT FLOOR PLAN
METHODS & QUALITY

TECHNICAL METHODS & QUALITY CONTROL

ENTHOL DIEDIN
BUILDING NO. 24

Scale: 3/32" = 1'-0" Date:



NET FLOOR AREA

4,212 Square feet

Square feet

FLOUR CAPACITY

Per square foot 1,000 LBS.

Per square foot

E. Supplemental Material
Floor Plan

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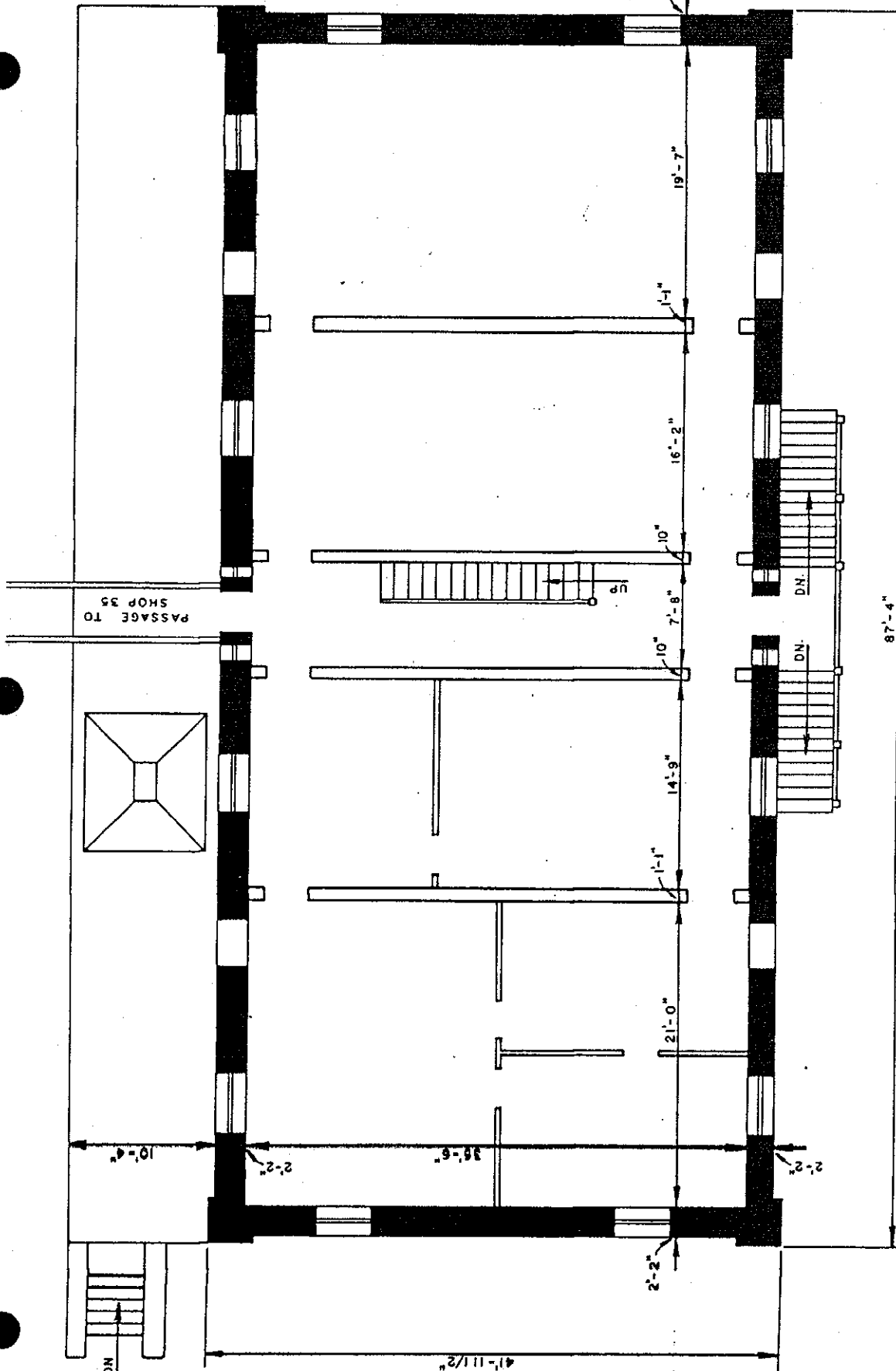
WATERVLIET ARSENAL

WATERVLIET, N.Y.

Drawn by: J.R. GANGEMI, A.E. App'd by: *[Signature]*

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
METHODS & QUALITY
CONTROL BUILDING
BUILDING NO. 24

Scale: 3/32" = 1'-0" Date: *[Date]*



NET FLOOR AREA
4,434
Square feet
FLOOR CAPACITY
Per square foot

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NET FLOOR AREA
4,434
Square feet

FLOOR CAPACITY
Per square foot

WATERVLIET ARSENAL

SECOND FLOOR PLAN
METHODS & QUALITY
CONTROL BUILDING
BUILDING NO. 24

Scale: 3/32" = 1'-0" Date: